

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY CHILDREN
Frederick DeBoom Witzel
ca 1980 - 1985

This collection of vignettes and reminiscences is in response to recent suggestions made by several of the younger tier in our family¹. Many years ago, at the urging of my brothers and me, Emma provided us with a written capsule of the historical facts that she could recall. These pages are a treasure for anyone wanting to satisfy his/her curiosity about the one hundred years of events from 1849 onwards. They also are a gold mine of genealogical data.

Unfortunately, the Wreden/Witzel side left few papers, wrote almost nothing, and even were taciturn and sparing in discussing their lives and times prior to their arrival in the U.S.A. and after. On both sides of this family we can rely on a few documents - some old photos and news clippings, and a good deal of inference in order to create a credible picture of their homes and lives, and their successes and failures.

Lin Yu Tang, a modern Chinese philosopher, quoting an old proverb, wrote that the years of our lives are traversed in four stages:

- Zero to twenty in childhood,
- Twenty to forty in daring plans and youthful enthusiasm,
- Forty to sixty in mature accomplishment, and
- Sixty to eighty in imparting wisdom and reliving the past.

Having arrived at what is considered in golf to be par for the course--the Biblical convention of three score and eleven, it may be useful, by doing a bit of leisurely research, to fill in some of the gaps and omissions left by the old timers and perhaps to amuse us all.

This collection is prepared, not only to provide an authentic bare-bones recital of the events that can be inferred from the records and memories, but also to weave into the story some of the delightful recollections and anecdotes of family personalities and their feelings, as well as a bit of the environment and ambience of the time. These will be made to fit three sections: first, the story of the De Booms; second, what is known of the Witzels; and third, a few mildly adventurous or funny personal escapades.

It is my hope that this try will inspire one or more members of my generation--brothers, cousins, wives, in-laws, etc., to set down a few authentic tales for our common amusement. The ground rule is that outright exaggeration is not permissible but that graceful and slight embellishments that create color and interest are encouraged.



Christmas
1983
Menlo Park, Ca.

Fred Witzel, Joanna Witzel
Martin, Virgilia "Jill" Witzel,
Bob Martin, Chris Witzel

¹ See the story about his Samsonite Briefcase for what he intended the collection of stories to contain. This introductory essay is one of only two that were polished enough to send out for typing, the rest are mostly rough drafts. All photos have been added by editor.